

REL-370

**Ethnicity, Gender, and Religion**

Spring 2014

Instructor, Richard Newton

Class Meetings: Nicarry Hall 212, T/R, 2:00pm to 3:15pm

Office Hours: M, 3-5pm; W, 10am-12pm; F, 1-3pm; By Appointment

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**Course Description**

Traditionally, survey courses in the world’s religions focus on creedal tenets (e.g. the Eightfold Path, the components of dharma, the Ten Commandments, the Five Pillars of Islam). A different picture of *religion* arises when we survey constructions of *ethnicity* and *gender* throughout global history. This course examines the relationship between these three discourses as categories of human meaning-making. We will take an interdisciplinary approach to consider a variety of case studies, and at each step along the way, we will work toward a deeper understanding of the human condition and how communities have tried to transcend it.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

By successfully completing the requirements of this course, you will be able to:

(1) *define key socio-political signifiers such as “ethnicity,” “race,” “gender,” “sex,”“culture,” and “religion.”*

(2) *investigate the interaction between ethnicity, gender, and religion in socio-cultural formation.*

(3) *explore different cultures and their multiple ways of making sense of the world.*

(4) *apply sociological, anthropological, psychological and historical tools to the study of religion.*

(5) *compare expressions of social difference across ancient/modern and socio-political boundaries.*

(6) *theorize about the role of ethnicity, gender, and religion in current events and in modern religious communities.*

(7) *apply critical reasoning, reading, writing, and presentation skills to your studies.*

(8) *Construct an online and in-person learning community centered on consciousness- raising and critical thinking.*

**Required Course Materials**

Books (to be purchased):

Kelly J. Baker, *Gospel According to the Klan: The KKK’s Appeal to Protestant America, 1915-1930* (University Press of Kansas, 2011).

Kenneth Kramer, *World Scriptures: An Introduction to Comparative Religions* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1986).

Stephen Sharot, *A Comparative Sociology of World Religions: Virtuosos, Priests, and Popular Religion* (New York: NYU Press, 2001).

Articles (to be downloaded from Canvas):

Michael Crowley, “Iraq’s Eternal War,” *Time*, June 30, 2014, 28-34.

Richard H. Davis, Excerpt from *Lives of Indian Images*, in *Religion, Art, & Visual Culture: A Cross-Cultural Reader*, ed. S. Brent Plate (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 176-181.

Diana L. Eck, Excerpt from *Darshan*, in *Religion, Art, & Visual Culture: A Cross-Cultural Reader*, ed. S. Brent Plate (New York: Palgrave, 2002),171-176.

Susan Harding, “Revolve, the *Biblezine*: A Transevangelical Text,” in *The Social Life of Scriptures: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Biblicism*, ed. James S. Bielo (New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 2006), 176-193.

John Stratton Hawley, Excerpt from the prologue to *Devi: Goddess of India*, In *Religion, Art, & Visual Culture: A Cross-Cultural Reader*, ed. S. Brent Plate (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 182-187.

Joseph M. Kitagawa, “One of the Many Faces of China: Maoism as a Quasi-Religion,”

*Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* (June-September 1974: 1/2-3), 125-141.

Philip Lutgendorf, “All in the (Raghu) Family,” in *Religion, Art, & Visual Culture: A Cross-Cultural Reader*, ed. S. Brent Plate (New York: Palgrave, 2002),187-193.

Amy Milligan, “Colors of the Jewish Rainbow: A Study of Homosexual Men and Yarmulkes,” *The Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 12:1 (2013): 71-89.

Horace Miner, “Body Ritual Among the Nacirema.” *American Anthropologist* 58 (1956): 504-507. Accessible via Wikisource, http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Body\_Ritual\_among \_the\_Nacirema

Paul O. Myhre, “What is Religion?,” in *Introduction to Religious Studies*, ed. Paul O. Myhre (Winona, MN: Anselm Academic, 2009), 3-14.

Sherry B. Ortner, “Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?” *Feminist Studies* 1:2 (Autumn 1972), 5-31, reprinted in *Woman, Culture, Society*, eds. M. Z. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1974), 68-87, http://radicalanthropologygroup.org/sites/default/files/pdf/class\_text\_049.pdf.

Michael L. Satlow, “Promised Lands,” in *Creating Judaism: History, Tradition, Practice* (New York, Columbia University Press, 2006), 22-68.

**Class Preparation**

Our course is divided into units. Each unit focuses on a specific construction of religion (e.g. tradition). On average, you will prepare about 25-30 pages per class period. Throughout the course, you will work in pre-assigned research teams for some assignments and individually for others. Early in the term, you will also watch short videos to help you with writing skills necessary for completing assignments. As a class we will progress through each unit in the manner below.

*Exploring Scriptures*

The first class session of the unit will introduce you to a specific religious tradition, giving you background information on its history and development. You will also watch a 3-5 minute video that introduces some theoretical tool to help you process what you are learning about a given tradition.

*Sociological Profile*

In these class sessions we will use sociological tools to make sense of how people are organized by and within specific religious traditions. Your reading will build upon what you learned in the exploration of the tradition’s scripture, and will give you an opportunity to practice applying the theories that you have learned thus far.

*Historical Case Studies*

For these sessions you will delve into the fieldwork of scholars and journalists who have looked at issues pertinent to our course (i.e. ethnicity, gender, and religion). In addition to understanding the topic, research question, thesis, and findings of each study, you should use your theoretical and historical knowledge to engage the study.

*Seminar*

Seminar days are our opportunity to add to the body of knowledge. Some of you will prepare 5-6 page papers arguing some thesis about ethnicity (and/or) gender and religion. For each seminar session, our panelists will present their papers to the class. The class will then engage them in a scholarly exchange.

*Research Days*

These days are designed for concentrated research. The more work you do outside of class, the more effectively you can use this time. The librarian and I are available for consultation as you work on your project, but our assistance is meant to complement the sufficient effort you have put in outside of class.

**Assignments**

**Assignments/Evaluations of Student Learning Outcomes**

*A. Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes*

My assessment of student learning outcomes will derive from your performance on the following assignments:

-Class Diary

About every other Friday (those weeks where we do not have a seminar paper), you will be contributing to a course repository that will hold thoughts, ideas, reflections, and resources related to the week’s topic.

You can share in a number of ways. You might contribute a two-page reflection essay discussing the readings. You might do a roundup blog post of news events you see as relevant to our discussion. You could upload a four-minute podcast where you share your views. Or you could create an art piece that deals with the topic. You will be in charge of substantively commenting on two classmates’ contribution by Sunday at 11:59pm.

-Seminar Papers

You are required to complete two (out of six) seminar papers in the course of the term. One of your three required papers will be pre-assigned. Each paper should be roughly **5-6pages** in length and argue a single thesis about ethnicity (or) gender and religion. Your argument should be built upon the theory for that unit. You must also embed some dynamic media (video, music, evocative image, etc.) to help illustrate your paper’s historical context. Your introduction and conclusion should follow the Get to the Point Introduction model, and your body paragraphs should follow the ACE model (including colors). Although no outside research is required, you should also include a bibliography that includes the sources you are using from class (and any others you may choose to use). **Papers are due on Canvas** **one hour before class time**. In class, you will present your paper and **three discussion questions** you would like us to discuss. We will also hold forth in a Q&A conversation about your paper.

-Preliminary Annotated Bibliography and Proposal (Midterm)

For your midterm, you will use the Get to the Point Introduction model to craft a 2-3 page research paper proposal. You will also use the Get to the Point Introduction model to create a (4)-entry annotated bibliography. Your entries should include (3) peer reviewed articles, (1) scholarly encyclopedia article, and a list of scriptural selections/artifacts that may be of use.

-Research Paper

For you final exam, you will submit a 10-12 page research paper using the Get to the Point Introduction and ACE models. Your paper should have a total of at least 6 sources (those on your annotated bibliography + 2 new articles). You will also peer edit a classmate’s paper.

The paper should advance a thesis about religion’s role in determining ethnicity (or) gender. Using scriptural economies and our other theories, you will analyze a tradition outside of one in which you were formed (i.e. grew up in). **You may not choose a different denomination/sect/branch of a tradition in which you were formed.**

*B. Grading of Student Performance*

10% - Class Diary

20% - Seminar Paper 1 (Presentation)

20% - Seminar Paper 2

20% - Midterm

30% - Final

*C. Grading Scale*

59 > =F Unacceptable Performance

60-63 =D- Insufficient Performance

64-66 =D Needs Improvement

67-69 =D+ Adequate Performance

70-73 =C- Acceptable Performance

74-76 =C Satisfactory Performance

77-79 =C+ Promising Performance

80-83 =B- Good Performance

84-86 =B Great Performance

87-89 =B+ Commendable Performance

90-94 =A- Excellent Performance

95-100 =A Superior Performance

*D. Class Schedule*

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| **Unit Focus** | **Tuesday** | **Thursday** |
| **Week 1**  *Orientation* | **1/13**  #BlackLivesMatter  \*Bring Miner with you to class, but do not read it.  \*\*For homework, please look over the syllabus and post any questions on the Course Syllabus FAQ. | **1/15**  Syllabus  *Defining Discourses: Religion*  Kramer, 1-17.  Get to the Point Introductions Video. |
| **Week 2** | **1/20**  *Defining Discourses: Ethnoi and Religion*  Sharot, 1-19. (20-66 are optional but will be useful to refer to throughout the semester)  ACE Video. | **1/22**  *Defining Discourses: Gender and Religion*  Ortner. (As you read, take a sheet of paper and use the Get to the Point Introduction model to help you read. Also highlight the key assertions that comprise the thesis.)  \*Class Diary post due by Fri 1/23 at 11:59pm. Comments due by Sun 1/25 at 11:59pm. |
| **Week 3**  *Imagining Religion in India* | **1/27**  *Exploring Scriptures*  Indian Religions Video.  Kramer 18-31, 49-59. | **1/29**  *Sociological Profile*  Sharot, 102-130.  \*Class Diary post due by Fri 1/30 at 11:59pm. Comments due by Sun 2/1 at 11:59pm. |
| **Week 4** | **2/3**  *Historical Case Studies*  Eck.  Davis.  Hawley.  Lutgendorf.  (All one file—“Excerpts from Plate”) | **2/5**  *Seminar Paper* |
| **Week 5**  *What is Judaism?* | **2/10**  *Exploring Scriptures*  Kramer, 170-189.  Judaism Video. | **2/12**  *Sociological Profile*  Satlow.  \*Class Diary post due by Fri 2/13 at 11:59pm. Comments due by Sun 2/15 at 11:59pm. |
| **Week 6** | **2/17**  *Library Research Day #1* | **2/19**  *Historical Case Studies*  Milligan. |
| **Week 7**  *Midterm Project Week* | **2/24**  *Seminar* | **2/26**  *Library Research Day #2*  Annotated Bibliography and Proposal are due by 11:59pm. |
| **Spring Break** | **3/3 (No Class)** | **3/5 (No Class)** |
| **Week 8**  *Islam Means Peace, Islam Means Submission* | **3/10**  *Exploring Scriptures*  Islam Video.  Kramer, 250-268. | **3/12**  *Sociological Profile*  Etown Islam Website.  \*Class Diary post due by Fri 3/13 at 11:59pm. Comments due by Sun 3/15 at 11:59pm. |
| **Week 9** | **3/17**  *Historical Case Studies*  Crowley. | **3/19**  *Seminar* |
| **Week 10**  *Under-stated: Religion in China* | **3/24**  *Theorizing Scriptural Economies*  Chinese Religions Video.  Kramer, 73-86, 96-107, 118-129. | **3/26**  *Ethnographic Research*  Sharot, 70-101.  \*Class Diary post due by Fri 3/27 at 11:59pm. Comments due by Sun 3/29 at 11:59pm. |
| **Week 11** | **3/31** *Historical Case Studies.*  Kitagawa. | **4/2 (No Class-Monday Schedule)**  *Seminar*  \*The paper will take place online, asynchronously over the weekend. Comments are due by Sunday, 4/5 at 11:59pm. |
| **Week 12**  *Sex, Gender, and the Body of Christ.* | **4/7** *Exploring Scriptures*  Christianity Video.  Kramer, 207-228. | **4/9** *Sociological Profile*  Sharot, 211-241. |
| **Week 13** | **4/14** *Historical Case Studies*  Harding. | **4/16** Seminar |
| **Week 14**  ***Special Events*** | **4/21 No Class (SCAD)** | **4/23**  *Reading Group*  Baker. |
| **WEEK 15**  *Final Project Week* | **4/28**  *Researcher’s Workshop Day 1* | **4/30**  *Researcher’s Workshop Day 2*  \*Rough Draft Due at beginning of class  Peer Review |
| **Final Paper**: **Thursday, 5/7/14, 11:00AM on Canvas** | | |

**Additional Policies, Resources and Information**

*A. Absences/Late Work*

This course is taught from the perspective that higher education is a professional endeavor. Just as there are ramifications for missing a job, there are ramifications for missing class.

You may miss 2 (two) classes without penalty. These are to help you account for those times when life just happens (family emergencies, serious illness, etc.). Any absence thereafter *may* result in a seven-point deduction from your overall grade. This is to numerically reflect the change in expectations that you should adopt as a result of your absences.

You are still responsible for submitting assignments by their deadlines. Late work is only accepted in the most extreme circumstances—that is, matters of life and death, not pass or fail. I reserve the right to make any deductions. Be aware that I may conference with the Office of the Dean of Students and/or request pertinent documentation.

B. *Written Work & Documentation Standards*

All written work should follow the conventions outlined in Kate L. Turabian’s *Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, eighth edition See http://www.press.uchicago.edu/books/turabian/turabian\_citationguide.html for more information.

All submissions should be proofread for spelling, grammar, and organization (e.g. ACE and Get to the Point Introduction models). Please use footnotes for citations.

Please double-space and use 12pt Times New Roman for all assignments (250 words = page). The body paragraphs of papers (except for the final) should be color-coded according to the ACE model (Blue=Assertion, Red=Evidence, Green=Commentary). All manuscripts should be double-spaced with one-inch margins on all sides.

I strongly encourage you to seek assistance from Learning Services. Their tutors can help you with writing and may serve as useful conversation partners. They are located in Baugh Student Center 226-239. Visit http://www.etown.edu/offices/learning/ for information on hours and services.

*C.* *Academic Integrity*

Elizabethtown College places a high priority on academic integrity. And I will not tolerate plagiarism, the purchasing and submission of purchased assignments/term papers, the non-attribution of one’s sources, and the dishonest use of another’s words or work. For more details on protocols related to academic dishonesty, please see the following course catalog. http://catalog.etown.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=243#Academic\_Judicial\_System

*D.* *Statement on Disability*

Elizabethtown College welcomes otherwise qualified students with disabilities to participate in all of its courses, programs, services, and activities. If you have a documented disability and would like to request accommodations in order to access course material, activities, or requirements, please contact the Director of Disability Services, Lynne Davies, by phone (361-1227) or e-mail [daviesl@etown.edu](mailto:daviesl@etown.edu)*.* If your documentation meets the college’s documentation guidelines, you will be given a letter from Disability Services for each of your professors. Students experiencing certain documented temporary conditions, such as post-concussive symptoms, may also qualify for temporary academic accommodations and adjustments. As early as possible in the semester, set up an appointment to meet with me, the instructor, to discuss the academic adjustments specified in your accommodations letter as they pertain to my class.

*E. Inclusive Language*

Our course discourse will employ inclusive language. Language can affect the politics and products of our thinking, so we will endeavor to think of “humankind” rather than “mankind,” “Before the Common Era (BCE)/Common Era (CE)” rather than “Before Christ (BC)/Anno Domini (AD);” and the names of deities, beings, and other entities rather than the generic pronoun “he.” This effort represents a small but pivotal first step in making our class a safe and open-minded space.

*F. Student Health Services*

One of the best ways you can prepare for the rigor of the class is by taking measures to stay healthy. In addition to proper nutrition and exercise, visiting Student Health Services and The WELL are great ways of making sure you’re doing all you can to take care of yourself. They have medical and counseling services to help you meet your needs. Even if you feel as if all is well with you, I encourage you to take advantage of both of these services, for preventative care is the best medicine. For more information, visit http://www.etown.edu/offices/health/.

*F. Campus Diversity Advocates*

The CDA provides education, advocacy, support and a safe space for persons desiring a more inclusive Elizabethtown College. These volunteers work to empower students of all walks of life (e.g. gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race, age, ability, religion). For more information, visit http://www.etown.edu/offices/diversity/advocates.aspx.

*G. Course Discomfort*

Because our course deals with categories that envelop who we are as human beings, participants may feel that the material is encroaching on their personhood. In the past, students have approached me on matters of faith/non-faith, struggles with cultural context, and other issues. Please know that I am always here to listen and assist you during my office hours or by appointment. The university’s chaplain/religious life director may also be of assistance. For more information about Rev. Tracy Wenger Sadd and Rev. Amy Shorner-Johnson, see http://www.etown.edu/offices/chaplain/staff.aspx.

/offices/chaplain/staff.aspx.